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SABDAPURVAYOGA

Indian Communication Theory and Practice

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ABSTRACT

The scientific view of language in Indian tradition as established in the *Vedas, Upanishads*, and the works of scholars and sages like *Panini, Patanjali, Bharatmuni, Bhartrihari,* and *Abhinavagupta*, connects the structure and rules of language, objective reality, and the absolute reality. In this view, the search for general rules underlying the diversity of language is considered as an exploration of the very nature of human mind and its relation with reality. It reveals the interconnections between language, thought and reality. Panini's grammar, *Bharatmuni's* view of dramatic performance as an integrated entity, and *Bhartrihari's* view of sentence as a meaningful unit reveal the relationship of the part and the whole, and is seen by them as a reflection of the relationship between *Brahma* the absolute reality and the objective manifestations in the world. The essential message of Indian classical texts with regard to language and communication is that there are different levels of language between the two extremes termed as *Pasyanti* and *Vaikhari*, which correspond to different levels of consciousness of the Absolute Reality. Comprehension of the Absolute Reality lies outside human perceptions of space and time and is therefore is not expressible in ordinary language. The experience of that reality can only be indicated by words that try to go beyond words. Insightful thought and speech require constant connection of higher and lower levels, and the constant interplay of the verbal and cognitive levels.

1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of the present article is to state the general principles of Indian communication theory and its contemporary relevance. The present context of communication studies and practice in India is the primary reason for studying Indian communication theory. India's tradition and culture have too often been treated in a historical way, as things which have been and are gone, and as wholly unrelated to, and without value for, for the present context. Indian tradition and culture, therefore, have not received the attention and consideration which is due to them. It is an unstated assumption of this view that values and content of tradition are impediments to modernization. It is the argument of this article that Indian communication theory is essentially in conformity with the most advanced scientific and rational thought in the field of linguistics and communication today. "India is one country in the world, best exemplifying and ageless, unbroken tradition of speculations about language and communication" (Padoux, p.1). Tradition and modernity are not contradictory. This two valued orientation is a Western construct. In the Indian tradition of multi-valued orientation, tradition and modernity are connected and complementary.

The explorations of modern science into the world of atoms in the twentieth century have confirmed the relational or contextual view of language and reality. At the ultimate core, at the heart of the world and the universe, there is no fixed form, no solidity. There are only relationships and dynamic patterns of vibration (*spandan*), shadows dancing in pure rhythm (Leonard, p. 34). A few types of elementary particles or waves combine together like the letters of cosmic alphabet to tell the story of galaxies, stars, light, heat, earth, and life (Rovelli, p. 150). These insights of science have far-reaching ontological and epistemological implications for our understanding and active expression of the world around and within us, as highlighted by several Noble laureates, renowned physicists and social scientists (Bohr, 1958; Heisenberg, 1962;Schroedinger, 1962; Charon, 1977; Bohm, 1980; Spariosu, 1989; Smith, 2014; Capra, 2015; Wendt, 2015; Burgess, 2018; Tagore, 2018).

Application of new scientific knowledge in social sciences, and particularly in linguistics, communication and psychology, emphasizes social and contextual character of language. Language is not a machine that can be put together on an assembly line. It is a complex system that develops with the thought and action. "Like the mythical suit of armour which was 'in-born' with Karna in the *Mahabharata*, thought and language are born together" (Matilal, 2017, p.123). In the ultimate analysis, language, thought and action may be seen as connected, inseparable and complementary. Language is therefore essentially uncertain, probable, emergent, and always in a state of making or 'languageing' even when it appears to be formal and definite. Contextual factors are inextricably bound together with language in ways that are enriching, complex and dynamic (Massip, p.57). Words do not have autonomous, objective identities prior to their use in language and communication. Every word we use in real-world situations usually has several synonyms or related words in grammar which have similar meaning and which could have been used in the same context. In recent years a growing mass of research in linguistics and allied fields of psychology, neuroscience and anthropology has begun to probe in the sub field of cultural linguistics. (Evans, 2010; Leavitt, 2011; Lee, 1996; Ho, 1995; Lucy, 1992; Sharifian, 2011; Wilce, 2017; Laszlo 2017; Chopra, 2017).

This article explores the complementarity between the Indian communication theory and modern science in what may be termed as a quantum turn in linguistics. In quantum mechanics, observation is what brings about objective and measurable reality. It is inherently a contextual process that involves first deciding what particular aspects to observe in nature and then preparing the perceptual means in such a way that observation can be made. If these steps are done differently, then different results will be obtained. Similarly, in language what brings about the transformation of ideas or impulses from potential meanings into an actual one is the speech act, which is intentional, an act of will. Language emerges from the speaker's intention to try to communicate one meaning rather than the other out of the several meanings in the mind. While the intention to communicate determines the effect in a certain way, the meaning that is actually communicated depends also on the listener whose comprehension will depend on how what is said is interpreted in the context of listeners' memory and experience. So the idea common to Indian communication system and quantum mechanics is that intention and cultural context relate to language in an apparently similar way as observation and measurement devices in physics relate to quantum reality.

The essential message of Indian classical texts with regard to language and communication is that there are different levels of language between the two extremes termed as *Pasyanti* and *Vaikhari*, which correspond to different levels of consciousness of the Absolute Reality. The Absolute Reality lies outside human perception of space and time and is therefore is not expressible in ordinary language. The experience of that reality can only be indicated by words that try to go beyond words. (Varma 1961; Kapoor, 2019; Matilal, 2014; Sastri, 2015; Ranganathananda, 2015; Tagore, 1998; Tripathi, 2018). In this context, the present study of the concept of *Sabdapurvayoga* as a cultural idea that straddles across various levels of language in an integrative and continuing flow can be helpful for a better understanding of cultural roots of language and communication in India and also in recognising its role in promoting intra-cultural and intercultural communication.

2. COSMIC ORDER

Vedic sages and scholars realized the overarching presence of a cosmic and social order that held together in a complex and adaptive system the different levels, forms, and phases of all the objects and processes that comprised the cosmos. They saw *rta* as a system which organizes the forces of nature, and of moral values in human society. In human society, when this balance and harmony is disturbed, there is disorder and suffering. All the forms of being existing and developing in harmony within an interconnected web of relationships were seen as organized in a system which integrated all the parts into an undivided whole in flowing movement. The cosmic order which extended to all levels of existence from the infinite to the infinitesimal was seen as inviolable, never to be broken, even by the Vedic divinities who were in fact considered as the guardians of *rta*.

This universal principle of creative unity is revealed in some of the earliest stages in the evolution of multicellular life on this planet. A multitude of cells were bound together into a larger unit, not through aggregation, but through a marvelous quality of complex inter-relationship maintaining a perfect co-ordination of functions. The larger co-operative unit accommodates greater freedom of self-expression of individual units, to develop greater power and efficiency in the organised whole. It is not merely an aggregation, but an integrative inter-relationship, complex in character, with differences within of forms and function. There are gaps between the units, but they do not stop the binding force that permeates the whole or the dynamic identity of the units. The most perfect inward expression of such organization has been attained by man in his own body. But what is most important of all is the fact that man has also attained its realization in a more subtle body outside his physical system in the universe. (Tagore, Rom 2).

Universal order is logically prior to the multiplicity of the particular. The latter emerges from the former, is sustained by it, and eventually merges into it. This process is not a metaphysical imagination but a physical reality. The substratum of both is same, not just similar. Human beings have the potential and competence to be fully conscious of the Absolute Reality, the single universal substratum of all that exists, perceptible and imperceptible. Generally, however, because of inherently limited sense perceptions, human consciousness remains at the level of the objective universe which is a manifestation of the underlying un-manifest Absolute Reality.

The question how a particular entity functions as a coherent sub-system within a coherent system has exercised generations of biologists and physicists dissatisfied with the mechanistic approach. Since the twentieth century, concepts of quantum coherence and the related systemic intercommunication have been used to convey the wholeness of the organism, where the whole and the parts are mutually integrated, and every part is as much in control as it is open and responsive. This internal coherence of energy underlies the unity of activity and the identity of the particular organisms. Every single organism from the tiniest quark to the largest quasar in the infinite cosmos seems to be able to exist and work autonomously while perfectly keeping in step and tune with the whole. There is no choreographer orchestrating the dance of the particles and waves in all the systems. Ultimately, choreographer and dancer are the same. (HO, 1997, p.360).

Isa Upanisad brings out the systemic aspect of cosmic and social order most succinctly and clearly. It says that the Absolute Reality is both universal and particular. The creation of the particular from the universal does not in any affect the integrity of the universal. The principle or quality of wholeness and integration is prior to the principle of particular and diversity. Oneness becomes many in the image of the oneness. Absolute reality is an integrated system, every particular entity is also an integrated system, emergence of the particular from the absolute leaves the absolute integrated and creative as before. Every particular entity has to be an integrated system to maintain its identity in the Absolute integrated system of infinite entities. The systemic integrity of each part is the bedrock of the integrity of the cosmos, and the order of the cosmos is the bedrock of the systemic integrity of the particular (Radhakrishnan, p. 566).

Rta is the principle whereby the Absolute Reality becomes manifest and perceptible to human senses. In *Rg Veda* it is said that, "heaven and earth exist in close unison in the womb of rta". (*Rg Veda,* X.65.8b). *Rta*, thus, is the one single system that embraces the cosmic order. The concept of *rta* explains the course of the evolution and sustenance of the natural and human world in terms of rhythm, time cycle, seasons, and biological growth. It refers to three basic elements of birth, growth, and transformation as the components of the complex cosmic system which functions according to its own self organizing principles and law. Scholars, scientists, and poets in all ages have always found it amazing that the Absolute Reality is so well ordered.

Rta is closely connected to the later concepts of *satya* and *dharma*. While *rta* may be seen as the structure of the cosmic reality at its both manifest and unmanifest levels, *satya* is the practical and operational aspect which is integrally connected to the Absolute reality. It because of these two principles that in Indian tradition the cosmos is considered as ordered and not disordered or disorganized. These two concepts also connect the cosmic level of order to the human and social levels of life. At the human level, a moral and legal order expressed through the norms of truth, non-aggression, freedom, and ecology aligns human existence with the cosmic order. Thus, *rta* and *satya*, or *dharma*, uphold the essential unity of the immanent and transcendental reality of the cosmos.

Indian conceptualizations of *rta, satya,* and *dharma,* are not comparable with Western principles in the sense that they provide specific ethical permissions or prohibitions. Truth in the Western sense is the sum of what can be isolated and counted, it is what can be logically accounted or what can be proved to have

happened, or what one really means at the moment when one speaks. While the Indian conception of truth is marked by an inner realization of the wholeness of reality, the Western view of truth is better described in English dictionaries as truthfulness or veracity of individual explicit statement. In Indian tradition, on the other hand, truth is best defined in *Mahabharata* when it says, " *Satya* is *dharma*, *tapas* (austerity) and *yoga*. *Satya* is eternal *brahma*, *Satya* is also the foremost *yajna*, and everything is established on *Satya",* (MB, V, p.497). In an illustration of this principle, *Mahabharata* says that speaking truthfully to a criminal is not acceptable as the truth. Verbal truth is only one side of the concept which is much more general. Truth is signified by virtue of conformity to the order of righteousness, interdependence and harmony on which the cosmos and social order is founded.

In Indian communication theory only the language that conforms to *rta, satya,* and *dharma*, is possessed of moral and social value. Inappropriate language can bring adverse results for both the individual and the social order. This is a fundamental difference between Indian and western conceptualization of language and communication. In *Rg Veda* it is repeatedly stressed that only insightful speech that conforms to natural and social order delivers well-being, and harmony.

आ प॑वस्व दिशां पत आर्जी॒कात्सौ॑म मीढ्वः ।
ऋ॒त॒वा॒केन॑ स॒त्येन॑ श्र॒द्धया॒ तप॑सा सु॒त इन्द्रा॑येन्दो॒ परि॑ स्रव ॥

Seers of cosmic and social order, faithfully following the righteous path through truthful speech and action pay homage to the lord of four regions. (RV, 9.113)

ऋ॒तं वद॑न्नृतयुम्न स॒त्यं वद॑न्त्सत्यकर्मन् ।
श्र॒द्धां वद॑न्त्सोम राजन्धा॒त्रा सौ॑म॒ परि॑ष्कृत॒ इन्द्रा॑येन्दो॒ परि॑ स्रव ॥

Speech that is truthful and faithful, and is purified by truthful action, flows in radiant magnificence to uphold the cosmic and social order. (ibid.)

The *Asya Vamiya Sukta* of Rishi Dirghatamas in chapter 1 of *Rig Veda* states that the ultimate abode of language is Brahma. Language is described as being the peak of the universe. It also says that "Speech has been measured out in four divisions, the Brahmans who have understanding know them. In that, three divisions are of hidden speech, men speak only the fourth division." Here language is related to cosmic order and is understood as the idea of the word as distinct from the spoken word. The spoken word is a limited manifestation of the inner word that reveals the truth. Thus, it says that "the vibration of speech creates or fashions out the manifold forms out of the waters of the infinite ocean of the ultimate Reality." (Agrawala, 1963, p. 150).

The *Vag Sukta* makes it explicit that only the speech that originates from the depths of the ocean of creation, and which is blessed by the cosmic order of the five elements of fire, sky, air, water, and earth, is worthy of achieving success and benefits. Insightful speech in faithful persons is considered as an unseen, all-pervading, creative and liberating energy, producing, sustaining, and extending all creation. It defends the cause of righteousness and freedom, removes ignorance, confronts and overcomes evil, and rewards the meritorious with riches (*(*RV, 10.125*)*.

Similarly, *Gyan Sukta* speaks of the excellent and spotless treasures hidden in speech which are disclosed when there is knowledge and faith in the utterances. People with wisdom use speech that wins them friends. Only those who make effort can speak and understand insightful speech. A person who has not understood the essence of speech can only utter words that are hollow. Good speech comes to those whose action is good and who do not disown friends. People have similar eyes and ears but they do not have similar comprehension and expression. People who are neither knowledgeable nor experienced can only have meaningless speech. An energetic, and knowledgeable person succeeds in society and wins praise in society. (RV, 10.71).

3. COMMUNICATIVE REALITY

India's communication theory recognizes that the absolute reality that underlies all particular manifestations, all names and forms, manifests itself in human language as a form of communication. The underlying foundation of manifest thought and speech lies in fundamental processes of nature which lie outside space and time but generates activities and objects that can be located in space and time. As the eternal, timeless essence that underlies everything that exists, *Brahma* the Absolute Reality is the essence of all language and communication that produces diverse names and forms. "The Brahman who is without beginning or end, whose very essence is the word, who is the cause of the manifested phonemes, who appears as the objects, from whom the creation of the world proceeds" (VP, 1.1).

The scientific view of language in Indian tradition as established in the *Veda, Upanishad*, and the works of *Panini, Patanjali, Bharatmuni, Bhartrihari,* and *Abhinavagupta*, embraces structure and rules of language, objective reality, and the absolute reality. *Panini's* search for general rules underlying the diversity of languages is ultimately an exploration of the very nature of human mind and its relation with reality. It reveals the interconnections between language, thought and reality. *Bharatmuni's* view of dramatic performance as an integrated entity, and *Bhartrihari's* view of sentence as a meaningful unit reveal the relationship of the part and the whole, and is seen by both as a reflection of the relationship between *Brahma* the absolute reality and the objective manifestations in the world.

The relationship of the general and the particular was recognized as early as Panini's *Ashtadhyayi*. During Panini's time there were two classes of schools, one holding that word connotes only the general category and the particular unit is derived from it, the other held that word connotes only the particular and the general cannot exist away from the particular. Panini clearly showed in his work that he held both the views, one in one context and the other in another (Sastri, p.41). Speech thus has the flexibility and creativity to connect different levels of reality through its insightful use. Panini's unique contribution to the science of linguistics lies in devising a logical structure and system of language which remains unequalled in its brevity and practical validity. Panini' work, in particular, and Sanskrit grammar, in general, showed the way to the development of modern linguistics and communication through the effors of scholars such as Franz Bopp, Ferdinand de Saussure, Leonard Bloomfield, and Lee Whorf.

Panini's grammar describes language as a little drama of life consisting of an action with different participants, which are classified into role types called *karakas*, which include: actor, goal, recipient, instrument, locative, and source (Kiparsky, p.16). Panini's system envisages the structure of language as an evolving hierarchy of inter-category and intra-category relations, from the base of physical reality, the materiality of language, the intermediate levels of increasing consciousness till one reaches the highest level of consciousness - *Brahma*- where the linguistic phenomena loses its autonomy and merges in the Absolute Reality. Paninian grammar symbolizes the perfect blending of science and spirituality in India's linguistic tradition (Kapoor, p. 86). All words and meanings are expressions of different aspects of interrelated and undifferentiated reality, strung together to form a beautiful garland of letters.

The relationship of the whole and the parts is a complex one and may be seen an adaptive process in which both are dynamic and evolving. In *Brahma* as the essence of all language and communication, all possibilities of expression are inherent. By virtue of its dynamic energy the absolute is charged with creative powers to express itself in diverse activities and forms. The true nature of Brahma is beyond all imagination, in itself it is unified but manifests itself in all possibilities of visible and invisible forms and parts. "Who has been taught as the One appearing as many due to the multiplicity of his powers, who. Though not different from his powers, seems to be so" (VP, 1.2).

In *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* conceptualization of speech as the abode of Absolute Reality or *Brahma* is most clearly spelt out. In Chapter IV.1.2, speech is considered as the abode of *Brahma*. Speech is not the only abode of *Brahma,* it resides in life, eye, ear, and mind also. Thus, Absolute Reality which is all pervasive, resides in speech, it is supported by space, and deserves to be worshipped as intelligence. This world and the other and all being are communicated through speech. All the *Vedas, Upanisads*, commentaries, and all material things are communicated through language. The Absolute reality is in speech. By recognizing and imbibing the true value and creativity in speech, one can even become godlike and be in the company of divinity. (Radhakrishnan, p. 246).

The integral unity of the manifest and the unmanifest world, and its communication through interaction is the core content of the Bharatmuni's *Natyasastra*. It integrates the Absolute Reality, the world of reflection and feeling, with that of structure and grammar. In *Natyashastra,* universality and specificity, abstraction and generalization, the structured and flexible are seen as interdependent and interpenetrating levels of communication. It considers a presentation good if it can communicate at varying levels to different audiences in culture specific and at the same time transcultural contexts. While being in finite time and place, it must have power to communicate beyond time and place and beyond the immediate performance (Vatsyayan, p. 89-90). *Natyasastra* remains a classic text devoted to the perfection of communication as a part of cosmic order and harmony.

In *Natyasastra* the presentation of the theatre was compared with the performative act of Vedic *yagna*. It treats the subject of language and communication, like Panini, as rules, and each section of the text is detailed in analytical manner. The whole concept of theatre is analyzed into parts and each part is examined in depth with a

view to recreating an interconnected and interpenetrated whole. The mention of *sattva* as mindfulness, and the importance of musical sounds, during the presentation, are instance of drawing upon the living and vigorous understanding of the use of different languages and dialects by different groups of people and throws light on recognition and acceptance of diverse languages and dialects.

Abhinavagupta's conceptualization of language and reality in *Tantraloka* makes it abundantly clear that unity and diversity are the aspects of same integrated wholeness which is in a state of constant vibration or pulsation (*spandan*), and change. In verse III.100 of *Tantraloka*, Abhinavagupta explicitly says that if the Absolute Reality did not manifest itself in infinite variety, but remained enclosed in its own singular unity, it would neither be the supreme power nor awareness. It is the nature of Absolute Reality, as the essence of language, to expand and diversify in infinite forms. Incessant creativity or consciousness is the essence of its absoluteness, and this is the eternal source of all linguistic forms and constructions. (Siva Sutras, p. xxi, Pandit,1991, 1997)).

This view of language seems somewhat similar to the present day view of language and reality in quantum physics. Language may be seen as a coherent wave that represents the potential of all outcomes that exist simultaneously in superposition or overlapping state, as a field of potentialities (Wendt, p. 217). While language as a whole, with all its levels from *Para* to *Vaikhari*, is in a sort of coherent state, meaning is actually communicated at the level of its decoherence, or *Vaikhari*, or speech. What brings about the transformation in language from a field of potential meanings into actual ones is the will and act of speech. It is speech as interaction that puts language into a context, with other words and particular listener. Words are stored in consciousness not as isolated entities, but as nodes in a network of connected or entangled words. They communicate meaning when intentionally and willfully used in a certain chosen order in particular context. Thus, "human consciousness can coordinate and correspond the 'motion of the atoms' in the functioning of speech at different levels according to the laws of nature at different levels of reality" (Schroedinger 93).

Language, speech, sound, vibration, energy, as the manifestations of *Brahma* or Absolute Reality, are not disorderly or disparate movement of their subtle constituent elements and forms. Thought, language, letters, words, and sentences are not randomly flying off in different directions, not even in insane beings. There is always a pattern, an order, which can be identified on closer consideration. The underlying pattern in Indian languages is integrative and accommodative and the objective is always interaction, coordination and sustenance. Language is creative and evolving on the hand; on the other it connects, unifies and upholds. The power of language to connect and comprehend the incessant flow of our sense perceptions and uphold the Absolute Reality is nothing short of a miracle, a divine gift.

From the foregoing it is evident that the primary concern of Indian thought on language and communication has been its cosmic and orderly origins and discerning use to support, sustain and strengthen all existence in the world. The cosmic energy is seen in this perspective as the essence of phonic energy, which is eternal, indestructible, subtle, and illimitable, which however evolves and unfolds through different stages and forms, and brings forth, names, or identifies, minutely and

precisely, all the various kinds and dimensions of objects. Language, then, is inherently endowed with creative energy. The creative energy precedes the forms and names, it is the creative energy of the Absolute Reality in the form of speech that defines and upholds the objects, their relations, and the entire order of nature. "The manifestation of the word which is one with the spirit in everybody is for the purpose of communication what is within" (VP, 1.1, p.1)

The complex relationship between language, thought and reality is quite clearly visible in the connection between grammar and philosophy in India's linguistic tradition. The structural analysis of the roots and affixes in Sanskrit grammar, into a hierarchy of levels of increasing abstractions culminating in the most general abstraction of *Brahman* is an illustration of the scientific approach wherein the visible, multi-dimensional world of reality is seen to be manifestation of the interrelated and complex system of Absolute Reality. The explanation of the empirical facts or reality is always an abstract and general concept or image. Mental and verbal abstractions are human creations to comprehend the manifest and differentiated appearance of the objective world. In Indian linguistic tradition the innumerable linguistic forms of the empirical reality of language are successively classified into a hierarchy of increasingly general and abstract notions and finally merged in the single notion of *Sabdabrahman*.

The goal of Indian thought on language and communication is not mere rational knowledge but also experience of the Absolute Reality or *Brahma*. The knowledge of language resulting in correct speech not only communicates meaning but also enables one to experience the Absolute Reality. This is the meaning of the Indian term darśana, which literally means 'vision' and which corresponds to the highest level of language termed as *paśyantī*. It is this feature that sets the Indian linguistics apart from the modern western perspectives on language. From the early Vedas and Upaniṣads, the Indian approach to language and communication has never been limited to composition and transmission of information about the objective world. All aspects of human experience, including the spiritual, were regarded as open to expression through language. Linguistics in India always had and continues to have both phenomenal and metaphysical dimensions.

It is evident that Indian scholars and sages saw that communication has both phenomenal and metaphysical dimensions. Etymologists like Yaska, and grammarians like Panini, Patanjali, and Bhartrihari, and playwrights like Bharat Muni were clearly concerned with the context of real life situations, but they did not overlook the umbilical relationship of the empirical and the spiritual. Bhartrihari began with a metaphysical inquiry into the nature and origin of language in relation to *Brahma*, but also explored technical grammatical points in popular language. By using correct speech the mind becomes free of all subtle impressions of incorrect speech, and it gradually rises to the level of *Pratibha* or direct and pure awareness. Such awareness is the essence of all phenomenal creation and in such a state all the differences and contradictions in the relative world are seen in the wider context of the Absolute Reality (Bhattacharya, p.34).

4. CONNECTIVE LANGUAGE

Indian communication theory focuses on the creative energy of language that connects and integrates the highest and lowest levels of abstraction seamlessly, gracefully, and holistically, not losing touch with reality at different levels. Unless human life, thought, speech and action, is in harmony with the all-embracing order and system of the Absolute Reality (*Rta*), it remains deprived of the real nourishing energy and its serene essence or bliss, by which all creation lives and is sustained It is based on the structure of language as an ascending hierarchy of conceptual abstraction between the base level of physical reality, through intermediate levels of abstraction, to the highest levels of abstraction - *Brahma* – where linguistic form merges with formless Absolute Reality beyond language and thought. While the connection of the basic linguistic terms with sense perceptions of everyday experiences is of fundamental importance, comprehension of the connections between our sense perceptions in their totality requires logically derived concepts at different levels of abstraction.

Indian classical texts indicate that the eternal mystery of the reality and its comprehensibility is a miracle and a real external world would be senseless without this comprehensibility. In speaking here of comprehensibility it implies the production of some sort of order among sense perceptions, this order being produced by the creation of linguistic concepts, and connections between these concepts, and between the concepts and sense experience. Language therefore creates our world for us by connecting the dots of the manifest and un-manifest reality. Thus, language is always abstract, uncertain, fluid, contextual, emergent, and connected, but this uncertainty is its creativity and competence to straddle across time and space and make the dynamic reality comprehensible to human mind and enable meaningful and effective action. As the human mind works with the objective reality the changed reality has to be comprehended anew to enable successful orientation and action on the part of human civilization. In this sense language is coexistent with reality, it defines reality and also creates reality as known to us. It spans, connects, and integrates different levels of objective reality to make it meaningful and complementary.

According to Bhartrihari, nothing can be said in advance concerning the manner in which the Linguistic concepts are formed and connected, and how they are coordinated with sense perceptions. The linguistic concepts are emergent and dynamic and in guiding us in the creation of such an conceptual and linguistic order of sense perceptions, contemporary relevance alone is the determining factor. All that is necessary is to formulate a set of rules of structure and function of language, since without such rules the use of language for acquisition of knowledge in the desired sense would be impossible. One may compare these rules with the rules of a game in which, while the rules themselves are constructed, it is their rigidity alone which makes the game possible. However, the structure will never be final. It will have validity only for a special field of application and will be subject to modification to fulfill its function.

Bhartrihari also emphasized that the connection of language and thought with the complexes of sense perceptions can only be comprehended intuitively and it is unadaptable to formal and logical determination. The totality of these connections– none of which is expressible in conceptual terms–is the only thing which

differentiates the living language from an empty scheme of concepts. By means of these connections, the purely conceptual propositions of language become general statements about complexes of sense perceptions. Primary linguistic concepts are directly and intuitively connected with typical complexes of sense perceptions. All other concepts are possessed of meaning only in so far as they are connected with the primary notions. The aim of language is, on the one hand, a comprehension, as complete as possible, of the connection between the sense perceptions in their totality, and, on the other hand, the accomplishment of this aim by the use of a minimum of primary concepts and relations.

In its first stage of development, language does not contain anything else other than very basic concepts directly related to sense perceptions. The first level, *Vaikhari*, in the evolution of abstraction and language is the formation of the concept of bodily objects of various kinds. Out of the multitude of our sense experiences we take, mentally and arbitrarily, certain repeatedly occurring complexes of sense perceptions and we correlate to the concept of the bodily object. Viewed logically this concept is not identical with the totality of sense perceptions referred to; but it is a creation of the human mind. On the other hand, this concept owes its meaning to the totality of the sense perceptions with which it is associated.

Bhartrihari says that the everyday thinking of most people is satisfied on the whole with this level. Such a state of affairs cannot, however, satisfy a philosophical mind; because the totality of concepts and relations obtained in this manner is utterly lacking in logical unity and consistency. In order to overcome this problem, a system retaining the primary concepts and relations of the "first layer" is logically constructed. This new "secondary system" at *Madhyamika* level pays for its higher logical unity by having concepts of the second layer which are no longer directly connected with complexes of sense perceptions.

At this level, we attribute our concept of a bodily object a name and meaning, which is to a high degree independent of the sense perceptions which originally give rise to it. This is what we mean when we attribute to the bodily object an identity. The justification of such a process rests on the fact that, by means of such created concepts and mental relations between them, we are able to orient ourselves in the chaos of sense perceptions. These notions and relations, although our mental creations, appear to us as meaningful and more stable than the sense experience itself, the character of which is little more than fleeting impressions. On the other hand, these linguistic concepts and relations, have justification only in so far as they are connected with sense perceptions.

Further striving for logical unity brings us to the level of *Pasyanti,* still more general in concepts and relations, which are higher abstractions from the secondary and so indirectly of the primary layer. Thus the story goes on until we have arrived at a system of the greatest conceivable unity at the *Para Vac* level of the greatest universality of concepts of the logical foundations, which is still compatible with the observations made by our senses. The supreme essence of speech at this level is like pure light which is free of the forms it takes in diminished light (VP 1.18, p.23).

These layers of abstraction and levels of speech are not clearly separated and may even overlap in practice. It is not even absolutely certain or clear which concepts belong to the *Vaikhari* layer or the higher layers. As a matter of fact, we are dealing with freely formed concepts, which, with a certainty sufficient for practical use, are

intuitively connected with complexes of sense experiences in such a manner that, in any given case of experience, there is no uncertainty as to the validity of an assertion. The essential thing is the aim to represent the multitude of concepts and statements, from a basis of fundamental concepts and fundamental relations which themselves can be chosen freely (axioms). It is a matter of faith that the cosmic system– as it is perceptible to our five senses– takes the character of such a well ordered reality. The successes achieved by language do give a certain encouragement for this faith in the comprehensibility of the infinite universe.

The Indian linguistic tradition adopts a consistent and holistic view which encompasses various levels of language thought and reality. While Panini's grammar tells us about the structure of plurality of words, it also reveals the interrelatedness of individual entities and thereby illustrates common structures within language, cognition and real world phenomena. Pāṇini's grammar is valued more because it reveals the spirit of Indian tradition. (Feddegon, 1963, p. 68). The Pāṇinian system symbolizes the perfect blending of science and spirituality in India's linguistic tradition (Kapoor, 2010, p. 86). All words and meanings are different aspects of one and the same thing, strung together to form a beautiful garland of letters.

In *Natyasastra,* Bharatmuni brought into one fold the cosmic order of the *Vedas,* the speculative thought and philosophy of the *Upanisads,* and the structure of the rituals of the *Brahmanas*, as also the state of knowledge of the disciplines of astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. The use of the concepts of *Yoga* and *Yajna* were contextually loaded in Bharatmuni's treatise. The text moves concurrently at the level of the physical and the metaphysical, the terrestrial and the celestial, the purely biological and the physical, the sensuous and the spiritual, with a single integral vision "to use the very language and vocabulary of name and form (*nama* and *rupa*- of identity and specificity of form) to evoke that which is beyond form or without form (*pararupa*), and all this through the vehicle of senses and sense perceptions and feeling, not intellection" (Vatsyayan, p.57).

Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* begins with metaphysical enquiry and then goes on to empirical study of phenomenal language. In the first section of the work called *Brahmakāṇḍa,* are given the basic ideas concerning the concept of *Śabda Brahma*. In the second section called Vākyakāṇḍa, the fundamental idea of the integral nature of the sentence is discussed. The third section is the largest, in which grammatical topics mostly concerning words and their meaning are discussed. This section is called *Prakarankāṇḍa*. All the sections are interrelated and connected and form an integral whole. Bhartṛhari's enquiry into the relationship of word and meaning in the *Prakarankāṇḍa* includes a clear analysis of the limitations and inadequacies of ordinary or secondary words to communicate all dimensions and levels of the Absolute Reality.

The common words are unable to express the nature of Absolute Reality. Words express the reality of any object or event in a manner that is only an interpretation and representation of the reality of the object or event. Words are based on cognitions which do not reveal the full reality and so present things in another form, not determined by their real form. Bhartrihari emphasizes that in ordinary cases of language use, the literal form may not convey the intended meaning. In such cases, a thorough understanding of the context is required to avoid confusions and misunderstanding in communication. In practice, the words are used on the basis of

bounded sense perception and rationality. Common people may not be able to reach the level of consciousness that may have been reached by scholars and sages. They understand things in a limited manner and engage in communication on that basis.

Bhartrihari says that when speech is purified by the adoption of grammatically correct forms and all deficiencies in the form of incorrect structure and pronunciation of words is removed, there results linguistic perfection which makes the attainment of worldly success and happiness possible. However, one must go on to practice *Sabdapurvayoga* for achieving the state of connection, oneness and harmony within and with the world. By constant practice in *Sabdapurvayoga*, all parts and sequences are connected into an undivided whole and the speaker reaches the level of consciousness where the words and sentences are transcended and speech becomes a flowing movement of integrated language to express reality in its wholeness. *Sabdapurvayoga* is a kind of focused attention in communication aimed at raising the level of consciousness and speech to the highest stage of Absolute Reality which is infinite, creative and ordered. (Iyer, 1992, p. 143).

Bhartrihari equates language with yoga because it makes us aware of a fusion of insightful speech with its cosmic source that lies beyond words in the Absolute Reality, or *Brahma*. The concept of *Sabdapurvayoga is* closely related to Bhartrihari's theory of *Pratibha* or intuition, and the *Pasyanti* or visionary aspect of language. For Bhartrihari, grammar appears to be not only an academic undertaking, but also a contemplative and meditative act that allows an intuitive insight in to the nature of *Brahma,* and the unmanifest wholeness of meaning. (Wilke, p.628). Through the knowledge and practice of *Sabdapurvayoga* one can learn to transcend the plurality of names and forms and see the unitary cause of all. This consciousness of the unitary cause helps one to place all language and communication in the holistic perspective of the cosmic order.

Pratibha or intuition which emerges like a flash of light does not appear out of the blue. Coming up with sudden enlightenment without ever having been closely involved with an area of study and contemplation is very improbable. A seeker has to examine the question from all sides, including new creative perspectives. To do that, one must have a good knowledge of the primary concepts. The more one knows, the easier it becomes to develop deeper insights for connecting the elements which may not seem to have anything in common. *Sabdapurvayoga* is rigorous and time consuming practice through the intermediary stages of *Vaikhari* and *Madhyamika* to reach the level of *Pasyanti* where one can 'see' everything in its place in the coherent flow of the Absolute Reality.

The levels of language discussed above correspond to the several stages of progress of consciousness which result from the quest for logical unity in the course of development of knowledge of reality. When one uses speech that connects to the source of all speech, which is infinite, creative and ordered, then speech will always be manifesting the values of widest comprehension and integration, which will accomplish the maximum value and purpose of communication. It is repeatedly emphasized in Indian linguistic tradition that language possesses unexplored powers and contains un-experimented and unknown combinations, which a creative and ingenious person can develop and use to throw light on the hidden dimensions of reality (Matilal, 2017, p.155)..

The insightful speaker delights in accepting limitations, and does not seek to evade them, for in each word he sees the manifestation of an infinite creative energy. Though speech conforms to rules of grammar it is yet a thing of infinite creativity. The creativity of speech accepts limitations of words, yet it transcends them. Only those who know that the infinite expresses itself through words can transcend the words. Words are the wings of creative speech, they do not keep it weighed down, they carry it to freedom. Words are the form of speech, creativity is its spirit. Words are the steps towards creative freedom, and creative speech or writing is the sculpture which stands on the pedestal of words. "When a man is exclusively occupied with the search for the links of causality, his mind succumbs to the tyranny of law in escaping from the tyranny of facts. In learning a language, when from mere words we reach the laws of words we have gained a great deal. But if we stop at that point, and only concern ourselves with the marvels of the formation of a language, seeking the hidden reason of all its apparent caprices, we do not reach the end—for grammar is not literature, prosody is not a poem. When we come to literature we find that though it conforms to rules of grammar it is yet a thing of joy, it is freedom itself" (Tagore, p.67).

5. CONCLUSION

The central feature of Indian communication theory is the concept of levels of language which dates back to the *Rg Veda*. The levels of *Para, Pasyanti, Madhyamika,* and *Vaikhari,* are a graduated series which is suited to different types or grades of mind-different intellectual capacities and temperaments. Each stage, when reached opens the way to the higher level of speech and thought. The relation between the levels is not temporal but mental and logical, and they are not wholly separate or mutually contradictory. The mind, rewired and transformed in its continuing advance, moves towards higher and truer understanding of speech as manifestation of infinite creative energy of the cosmos.

In this communication theory, meaningful speech and clear thinking which are inseparably inter-connected, require constant connection of higher and lower levels, and the constant interplay of the verbal and cognitive levels. This is a logical process, abstractions being checked against factual information, and predictions against results. If language loses touch with the reality, it becomes dead abstraction characterized by vagueness, ambiguity, and even utter meaninglessness. Similarly, lower level speech which does not rise above the wide assortment of facts without ever drawing any general conclusions leaves the listener with no directions as to what to do with the narration of facts and events.

The knowledgeable and insightful person who communicates with people through speech, and who achieves merit in life is the one who can connect with and integrate all levels of speech, moving coherently and timely from *pasyanti* to *vaikhari,* and from *vaikhari* to *pasyanti* in smooth and graceful manner. It would be something like the coherent flow of the goddess of speech *Vagdevi* in the *Rg Veda,* which rises from the waters in the ocean, breaths strongly like the wind, penetrates Earth and Heaven, speaks to Gods and men alike, holds together all existence, blesses the faithful and the thoughtful with well-being and wealth, and in her mighty grandeur touches the heaven with her forehead.

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